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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/334,574	06/21/1999	PAUL E. MASSOD	10925/002001	5472

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EXAMINER

LEE, DIANE I

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2876	

DATE MAILED: 07/17/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/334,574	MASSOD, PAUL E.	
Examiner	Art Unit		
Diane I. Lee	2876		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 May 2002 .

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-4,6-16 and 18-36 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-4,6-16 and 18-36 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ .	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

1. Receipt is acknowledged of the Amendment filed 08 May 2002. Claims 1, 13, 24, 26 are amended; and claims 34-36 have been newly added. Currently, claims 1-4, 6-16, and 18-36 are pending in this application.

Claim Objections

2. Claim 26 remains objected to because of the following informalities:

(a) Re claim 26, lines 3: The use of an alternate language such as “**and/or**” are not clear to the Examiner. The limitation must be clear as to where the unique sequential identification being fixed to. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-4, 6-16, 18-26, and 34-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Markman [US 5,794,213-cited by applicant].

Markman discloses a method and an apparatus for verifying inventory in group which conducted in a dry cleaning establishment, comprising:

an input mean 42 to record the article information and the total number of articles assigned in a group presented by the customer, and wherein the group of articles presented by the customer is a grouped order (see col. 5, lines 23+, col. 10, lines 66+);

a printer 30 to print tags 32 having unique sequential identification 50 to be affixed to the articles 24 (see figures 1-3). Markman further discloses that articles in a grouped order correspond to a transaction, and the machine readable codes 50 having an unique sequential identification on labels 32 including a group identification portion 34 and a sequential number concatenated to the group identification portion (i.e., subsequently numbering the tag with 1 to 4 with same group ID number as shown in figure 3). The tag also shows the total number of articles 52 in its group (see col. 5, lines 24+); this process of assigning the article by the input means and affixing the tag to the article obviously teaches that the articles presented by the customer being physically grouped by a manual or automated grouping process into a physically grouped order;

a scanner 70 to scan the machine-readable codes 50 on labels 32 (see figure 1);
a computer 72 having a storage media storing a computer program product which includes instructions for causing the computer to verify that articles in a grouped order belong in the grouped order. Upon scanning the group code on the labels, the computer verifies the articles belong in the physically grouped order. The verifying instructions includes a process of examining codes on tags associated with each article in the group to determine that the article belongs in the group. Thus, by scanning unique identifier codes on each tags, the examining process is performed (i.e., examining codes on tags associated with each article in the group to determined that the article belongs in the group). The verification process also includes the process of accessing a database to retrieve the number of articles in the group and matching numbers scanned from the labels on the article associated with the tags. This process teaches the process of retrieving the number of articles in the group and process of matching numbers scanned from its group order (see col. 3, lines 65+, col. 5, lines 48+, col. 7, lines 33+, col. 8, lines 19+, 9, lines 45+, col. 11, lines 43+, and figures 1-2);

indicators 92, 94 for indicating to an operator if the scanned unique sequential identification corresponds to an item that belongs in the group and wherein each group of articles are assigned to

storage location 84 (see col. 8, lines 4+, col. 10, lines 12+ and figure 1). After the operator scans the tag, the data processor searches its memory 60 to determine whether the particular article is the first article encounters in its group. If the processor determines that the particular article is the first article encounters in its group, the data processor determines the total number of the articles in its group (i.e., the total number stored in the database) and selects the storage location 84 by sending a signal to the indicator, which corresponds to the selected storage location. This signaling process visually identifies storage location to the operator if the scanned unique sequential identification corresponds to an item that belongs in the group (see col. 8, lines 1+ and figure 1-4). If the article is not the first in its group, the data processor selects the correct storage location 84 (i.e., already assigned to previous members of the group) by sending its signal to the corresponding indicator (i.e., changing the signal indicator). This process of changing signal (i.e., from one storage indicator to another storage indicator) visually and positively indicates to the operator if the scanned unique sequential identification corresponds to an item that belongs in the group, while the not-signaled indicator provides negative indication to the operator the scanned article does not belong in the group (see col. 8, lines 23+ and figure 1-4). Markman also utilize additional indicator such as different color of LED indicators and an audio signal to indicate that the count has reached the total numbers and the group has been successfully assembled (see col. 8, lines 30+). This process also teaches that the data processor includes an instruction such as subtracting a base (i.e., a total number of articles in a group) from a portion of the unique sequential identification to provide the number of items in the group (see col. 8, lines 30).

Although Markman utilizes the indicators to positively indicate or convey different message to the operator (e.g., the scanned code belongs to corresponding assigned storage location, the count has reached the total numbers, and the group has been successfully assembled), and wherein this illustration of positively indicating process obviously includes a process of negatively indicating or conveying different message to the operator; Markman does not explicitly teach that process of positively indicating

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to an operator if the scanned unique sequential code does not correspond to an item that belongs in the grouped order.

Since Markman teaches that additional indicating means can be utilized in the system to draw the attention of the operator, e.g., using different color of indicators, audio signal, and/or numerical readout (see col. 8, lines 1+), it would have been obvious to an artisan of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate additional indicating means in the system of Markman in order provide positively conveying the messages relating to the handling of the articles to clearly indicate the status of the article handling process to the operator rather than negatively or indirectly conveying the message. Accordingly, such modification (i.e., providing a positive indication rather than a negative or an indirect indication) it would have been an obvious extension taught by Markman for providing a direction communication to the operator for its greater effectivity in conveying the information and to reduce the confusion to the operator when handling the articles.

5. Claims 27-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Markman in view of Amacher et al. [US 4,716,281-referred as Amacher]. The teachings of Markman have been discussed above.

Although Markman discloses different color of LEDs as indicator to indicate the counting process has reached the total numbers and the groups has been successfully assembled, he does not disclose the examining process includes specifically indicating to the operator that the verification process has started, ended successfully, or ended unsuccessfully.

Amacher discloses a system having a plurality notification indicators 98, 100 to indicate the specific operation process to the operator, e.g., a green light indicator 100 for a successful scanning operation, red light indicator 98 for unsuccessful scanning process, and both lights extinguished when the scanning process has started (see col. 1, lines 50+, col. 5, lines 4+, and figure 2).

In view of Amacher's teaching, it would have been obvious to an artisan of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the specific operation indicators in the system of Markman in order to further avoid confusion of the operator of the system.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 08 May 2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
7. In response to applicant's argument with respect to Markman that the claimed feature (i.e., "verifying that articles, article which were physically grouped by a manual or automated grouping process into a physically grouped order, belong to the physically grouped order") is not described by Markman (see page 3, lines 24+); the examiner respectfully disagrees. First, with respect to the process of *physically grouping the article by a manual or automated grouping process into a physically grouped order*, since Markman teaches an input mean 42 recording the article information and the total number of articles assigned in a group presented by the customer, wherein the group of articles presented by the customer is a grouped order (see col. 5, lines 23+, col. 10, lines 66+), and a printer 30 to print tags 32 having unique sequential identification 50 to be affixed to the articles 24 (see figures 1-3). Markman further discloses that articles in a grouped order correspond to a transaction, and the machine readable codes 50 having an unique sequential identification on labels 32 including a group identification portion 34 and a sequential number concatenated to the group identification portion (i.e., subsequently numbering the tag with 1 to 4 with same group ID number as shown in figure 3). The tag also shows the total number of articles 52 in its group (see col. 5, lines 24+). This process of assigning the article by the input means and affixing the tag to the article obviously teaches that the articles presented by the customer being physically grouped by a manual or automated grouping process into a physically grouped order. Second, with respect to the process of *verifying that articles belong to the physically grouped order*, Markman further teaches the process of verifying that the article belongs to the physically grouped order by scanning the codes on the

labels and examining the code on the tags that is associated with the article, i.e., Markman teaches a system that provides an automated assistant for aiding an operator in managing articles 24 in groups 26. When the operator scans the tag, the processor searches its memory 60 to determine whether the particular article belongs the first article group or not (see col. 8, lines 4+, col. 10, lines 12+ and figure 1). If the processor determines that the particular article is the first article encounters in its group, the data processor determines the total number of the articles its and selects the storage location 84 that is already assigned by sending a signal to the indicator. This signaling process visually and positively indicates to the operator if the scanned unique sequential identification corresponds to an item that belongs in the group (see col. 8, lines 1+ and figure 1-4). If the article is not the first in its group, the data processor selects the correct storage location 84 (i.e., already assigned to previous members of the group) by a signal to the corresponding indicator (i.e., changing the signal indicator). This process of changing signal (i.e., from one storage indicator to another storage indicator) visually and positively indicates to the operator if the scanned unique sequential identification corresponds to an item that belongs in the group. Therefore, Markman teaches the process of verifying that the articles in a grouped order (i.e., per customer's order) correctly belong to the grouped order by examining and indicating process.

8. Applicant's states that Markman does not describe the process of positively indicating to an operator if the scanned unique sequential code does not correspond to an item that belongs in the group order. The examiner agrees. However, Markman teaches that additional indicating means can be utilized in the system to draw the attention of the operator, e.g., using different color of indicators, audio signal, and/or numerical readout (see col. 8, lines 1+), it would have been obvious to an artisan of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate additional indicating means in the system of Markman in order provide positively conveying the messages relating to the handling of the articles to clearly indicate the status of the article handling process to the operator rather than negatively conveying message. Accordingly, it would have been an obvious extension taught by Markman for providing a

direction communication to the operator for its greater effectiveness in conveying the information and to reduce the confusion to the operator when handling the articles.

Conclusion

9. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Branch [US 5,125,513] discloses a method for automatically assembling the article in a selected order.
10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Diane I. Lee whose telephone number is 703-306-3427. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Lee can be reached on 703-305-3503. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-7722 for regular communications and 703-308-7722 for After Final communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0956.

Diane I. Lee

Diane I. Lee
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2876

July 9, 2002